The bitterness of this vegetable has brought it into notice in the quality of a tonic and stomachic. I have been informed of its use for this purpose by physicians in different parts of the country. The most common mode of its employment, I understand, is by infusion or decoction. Pursh speaks of it as a remedy in the colic, but on what principle it can operate in relieving that disease, I am at a loss to say.—The amount of bitter resin, which the plant contains, led me to suspect that it might possess some of the properties of aloes, to which the plant is botanically related; but on trial, made in several instances with the root in powder, a dose of ten or twelve grains produced no effect of this kind whatever. A physician, who experimented with larger quantities, with a view to test this quality, informed me that a dose of twenty grains occasioned much nausea and tendency to vomit, followed by some dizziness; but that no cathartic operation took place.

Dr. Cutler, in his account of the plants of New England, informs us, that this plant has been considered useful in chronic rheumatism; but does not mention the dose or preparation.

As far as we can sum up the testimony hitherto offered respecting the general properties of

this plant, it appears that the infusion or decoction acts as a tonic in small doses. Indeed the exhibition of large ones would be inconvenient from the extreme bitterness of the plant. The powder, in small quantities, produces no immediate visible effect, except that it has appeared to invigorate the appetite. In large doses it disturbs the stomach, and possibly exerts some narcotic effect on the system. It remains to be determined whether these consequences are attributable to the resin, which the infusion does not dissolve; or whether the largeness of the dose is alone instrumental. It is well known that the stomach does not tolerate even gentian or any common bitter in large dose. And it seems probable that if the Aletris should ever increase in reputation as a tonic bitter, it will only be by its use in limited quantities.

BOTANICAL REFERENCES.

Aletris farinosa, Linn.—Willd. *Sp. pl.* ii. 183.—*Bot. Mag. t.* 1418.—Aletris alba, Michaux, *Flora.* i. 189.—Pursh, i. 225.—Hyacinthus floridanus spicatus, Plukenet, *amalth.* 119, *t.* 437, *f.* 2.—Hyacynthus caule nudo, &c.—Gronov. *Virg.* 38.

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